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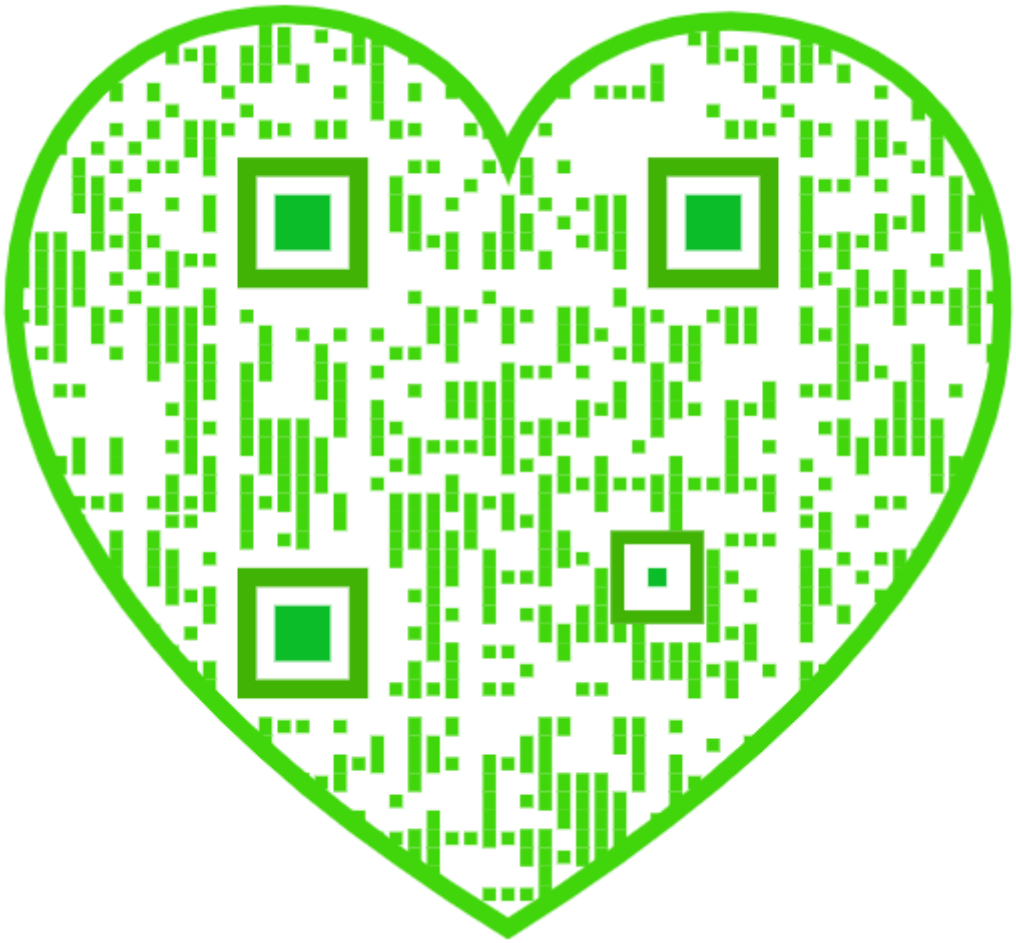

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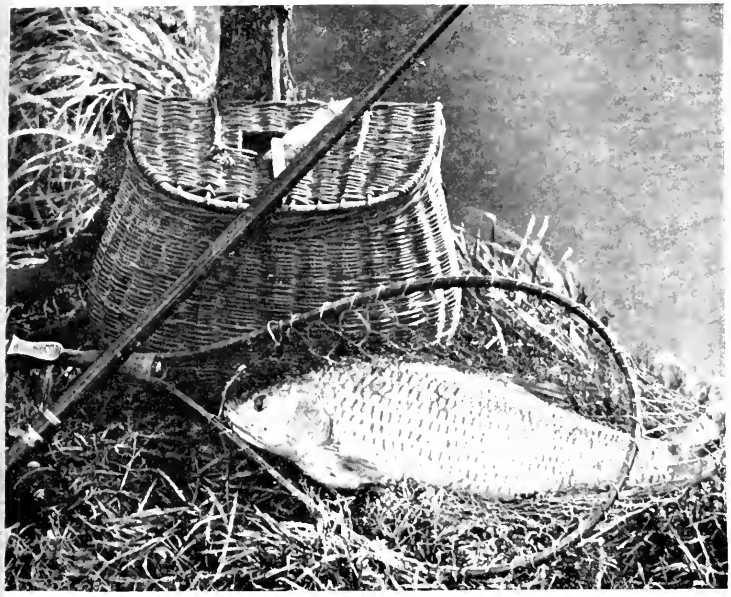
LOS ANGELES

ROACH PERCH BREAM DACE CHUB AND CARP

(An Old Angler's Hints and Wrinkles)

By A. R. MATTHEWS

Editor of "The Angler's News"
Author of "How to Catch Pike," etc.



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HOW TO CATCH COARSE FISH

BY

A. R. MATTHEWS

EDITOR OF "THE ANGLER'S NEWS"

LONDON

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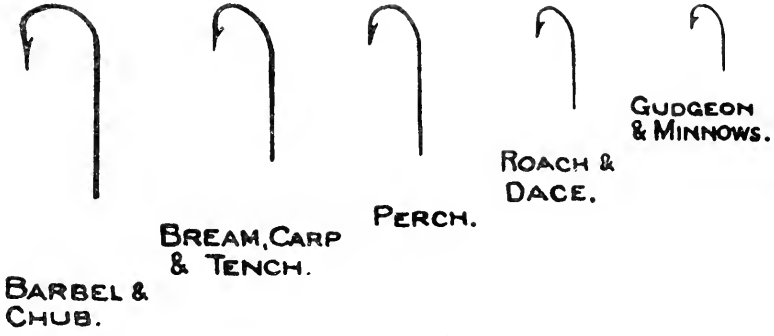

Fig. 1.—Hook Sizes.

The hooks here illustrated have been drawn to natural size, and I recommend them for the various fish named. That for barbel and chub is a No. 2 Sneck bend; the others are of the Crystal pattern, and in the order given are Nos. 5, 6, 11, and 15.

HOW TO CATCH COARSE FISH

I

The Angler's Outfit

THE following is a list of articles required for angling for roach, perch, bream, chub, dace, tench, barbel, rudd, carp, gudgeon, and minnows:

Rod.
Reel.
Line (plaited).
Casts.
Hooks to gut (various sizes).
Hook and cast book.
Floats (various sizes).
Caps (various sizes).
Shot (mixed split).
Gentle box.
Worm bag.
Basket or bag for tackle, fish, and lunch.
Landing-net.
Line winder.
Plummet.
Leger leads.
Paternosters.
Disgorger.
Pliers.
File.
Scissors.
Cobbler's wax.
Sewing silk.
Vaseline.

I shall revert to the various kinds of tackle and the accompanying accessories in subsequent pages.

II

The Progress of Angling

The art of angling and catching fish is one of the most ancient amusements or sports of which we have any knowledge, but, old as it is, it was never more popular than to-day. History tells us that the ancient Egyptians, the Greeks and Romans, and the Anglo-Saxons practised the art in one form or another. They may be said to be the pioneers of the sport, while I think it can be asserted without fear of contradiction that the English nation has done more than any other nation to create the world-wide popularity which angling at present enjoys.

It has been said that we are a nation of shopkeepers, but the more I visit river, lake, and sea, the more am I convinced that we are a nation of anglers!

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There has been a boom in angling ever since dear old Izaak Walton was wont to ramble down leafy Fleet Street and Cheapside on his way to the Lea, and gave us the benefit of his experiences in that most fascinating of classics, *The Compleat Angler*, the first edition of which was published in 1653. Walton also fished in the Thames, which has probably been the school of more anglers than any other river in the world.

In the days that are long ago, anglers—in the absence of trains, tubes, and motor-buses—were compelled to walk to their favourite fishing haunts, and they would often meet at a certain spot and complete the journey together, no doubt exchanging experiences by the way and indulging in other pleasant piscatory chat. The sight of these " honest men " with their angle rods and fishing bags was an incentive to others to take up the sport, and so it gradually grew and expanded. When the stage coach made its appearance anglers were enabled to undertake longer journeys, while they also availed themselves of the old market carts and waggons which brought vegetables and other produce to London.

The earlier London anglers had favourite pitches for roach round about Old London Bridge, then a wooden structure; and one can also picture them fishing in the numerous streams which ran into the Thames from the northern heights, and from such then rural spots as Brixton, Tooting, Bermondsey, and other places—these waters are now numbered among London's long-lost rivers.

By and by fishing-tackle shops sprang up and angling clubs were formed. I cannot find any trace of the date of the establishment of the first fishing-tackle shop, but in London, at least, the first club to be started was the Walton and Cotton Angling Society, which is still in existence. It was established in March, 1819, and thus is over a hundred years old. Fishing clubs are now to be numbered by hundreds, perhaps thousands, in London and the provinces. Not a few of these clubs possess their own private waters, and are generally open to accept new members.

At one period, many of the rivers and lakes were much poached, angling took place in and out of season, and great numbers of immature fish were destroyed. Fortunately, anglers themselves came to the rescue, and these evils have been practically wiped out. Fish preservation is universal. There are close times and standard sizes for fish, under which it is illegal to kill them in the Thames, Lea, Norfolk Broads, and other waters. A good deal of restocking is also carried on, and in this direction it may be at once said that the Thames is the best preserved and restocked river in England, thanks chiefly to the efforts of the Thames Angling Preservation Society, which, in 1920, established a record by turning down

between Teddington and Shepperton nearly half a million roach, dace, and perch.

Freshwater fishing has made a tremendous jump in public estimation during the past ten years, and particularly since the end of the Great War. People of all classes have taken it up with enthusiasm. They have at length discovered that catching fish is not the angler's only joy—fishing is the partner of fresh air, picturesque scenery, and restful days in the open.

Nature's haunts are the angler's haunts.

Many of those who have fought and bled for England have joined the ever-growing Waltonian army, and have found in angling just what they were in search of—a splendid medicine for their war-worn bodies and shattered nerves, for difficult indeed is it to meet with more peaceful and soothing surroundings than those afforded by the—

"Smooth stream's wand'ring side."

The increasing popularity of angling has also been noticeable in another direction—I refer to sport with rod and line in the sea. It is only a few short years back that this branch of the art had few followers; to-day their number is legion, and sea fishing has become one of the principal attractions on the coast, many of the popular resorts vying with each other in setting forth, in guide-books and through other media, their facilities for carrying on the sport and the special fish to be caught in the local waters.

III

Waltonian Wisdom

Do not let the fish see you if possible—when on the bank stand or sit well away from the edge.

Do not stamp on the bank or in a boat or punt, as fish are very sensitive to vibration.

Always put the landing-net together before starting to fish. The first fish you hook may be a big one.

When fishing in a strange district for the first time, notice local landmarks, which will help you to find the way back to the station the more easily in the evening.

Put a gentle on the hook by the skin, and then pinch some groundbait or a piece of paste round the shank of the hook, leaving the gentle room to wriggle. This dodge often succeeds when roach have been ignoring paste and gentles separately.

Small fry repeatedly jumping from the water in a body is a sign

of the presence of some hungry perch, trout, pike, or chub, and the angler might do worse than drop in a lively minnow or other tiny fish at the spot.

To mark a baited hole for bream, barbel, etc., ascertain the depth, and then anchor a small cork on the spot by means of a piece of string and a leger bullet.

At a likely place for rudd, throw in some small crusts of bread, so that they drift with the wind or stream, and if any rudd are about they will soon reveal their presence by attacking the bread and splashing and rushing through the water. Then cast your bait as near as possible to the hungry rudd.

Have clean hands when making paste, and wrap it in white paper.

Never put a wet rod in its case.

Should the reel become very wet, remove the line, wipe the reel carefully, grease it, and then place in a dry spot. This will often prevent a wooden reel from warping.

If one or two fish escape after being hooked, examine the hook. The barb may require touching up, or it may have been broken off.

Test gut for strength in its dry state. Try each link carefully with the hands, and if the cast breaks in one or two places the best thing to be done is to use another and sound cast.

Rub a little mutton fat, oil, or "Mucilin," on your rod joint ends. It will prevent them sticking in the ferrules.

Should a rod joint get fast, it can often be removed by applying a lighted match to the ferrule.

Always soak your gut cast and hook length before beginning to fish.

Coloured pastes are obtained by mixing the paste with red lead (vermilion), cochineal (crimson), and yellow ochre and saffron (rich yellow).

Gentles or maggots may be coloured red, yellow, and green by means of Dolly dyes and "Chrysoidine" (to be purchased at chemists).

Wrap a fish securely in paper when sending it to be preserved. Do not use wet grass.

IV

How Roach Floats should Cock

The number of shot placed on the cast is of course regulated by the weight of the float with which it is intended to fish.

In still pieces of water, such as canals, lakes, drains, and ponds,

a shot on the hook length is unnecessary, and I invariably dispense with it.

Remember that care and neatness are called for when putting shot on a cast, and it is also very necessary that the float should be made to cock properly. Some anglers seem to enjoy seeing their float project from the water like a miniature bell-buoy, and then wonder why they miss so many bites from artful roach. It would almost take a whale to pull under some floats! Not only are bites more difficult to detect when the float is half out of the water, but the resistance it offers to being dragged under may cause the

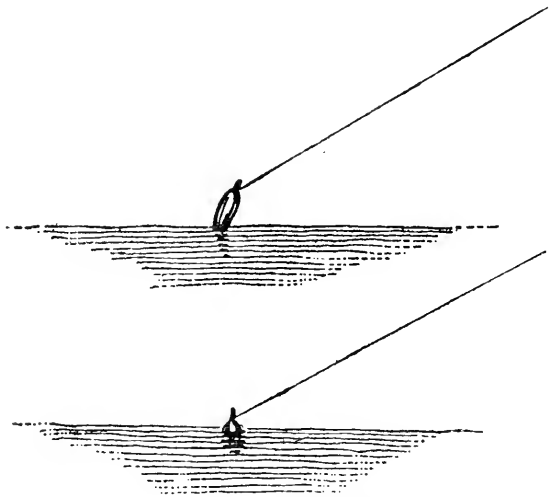

FIG. 2.—(Right Way.)

fish to reject the bait, while the float gets blown about by the wind and given all kinds of unnatural movements. I shot my floats for roach, dace, and often bream, until only about half or a quarter of an inch appears above water. The slightest suck or draw from a fish is then instantly discerned, and nine times out of ten the float disappears—which is the signal to strike.

Floats used specially for chub, barbel, and bream may show a little more of the top, but not much, above the surface, but I believe in all floats being kept well down, even in a fast stream or when the water is ruffled by waves.

The right and the wrong positions of a float are shown in the above illustration.

V

Shotting the Cast and Hook Length

It is the small thing which often counts in angling. Take split shot as an instance. The principal mission of shot is to weight the cast and hook length and sink the float to the necessary depth in the water, and anglers should always make certain that these useful little articles are in the basket. I remember going fishing on one occasion and large chub, which I did not expect to encounter—I was after roach — breaking the only two shotted casts I had brought. Naturally these casts were pretty fine, in view of the fish I was after, but I hunted up a third and stouter cast from the hook book, determined to get some of my own back should another chub make off with the bait. Then I experienced a kind of shock. I found, to my dismay, that I had left the shot box at home, and had no means of properly sinking my line; but fortunately I espied another angler farther along the bank, and he very kindly gave me a few shot. To nip these on the cast with the pliers was but the work of a minute or two, and I had my revenge on the chub for smashing me up by catching a specimen of nearly 4 lb. I mention this incident to show the value of a few split shot.

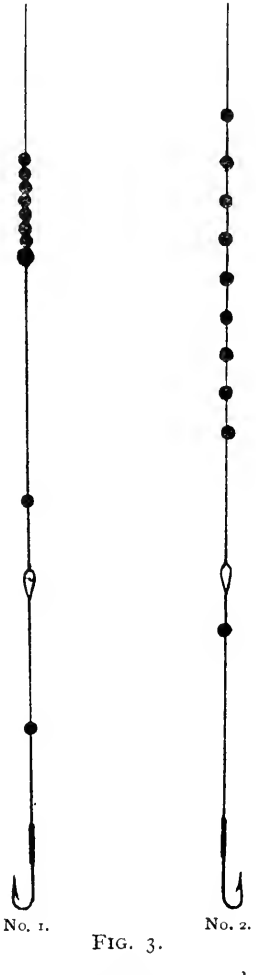

FIG. 3.

Not only are shot of the utmost use in angling, but there is a right and a wrong way of putting them on the cast and hook length. Anglers are often very careless and slovenly in this connection, but in my opinion a badly shotted cast may mean a poorly filled basket. Sometimes the shot are placed on the cast without the slightest regard to position

and size, and heedless of the proper balance of the float or the undercurrents which lurk around. Before to-day I have seen anglers with half a dozen shot on a 12-inch hook length, whereas only one should have been there, and found shot so high up the cast that when a shallow swim presented itself the angler was unable to lower the float. Thoughtless anglers also put a big shot within an inch of the bait on the hook, with the result that many a sly old roach and chub must have scented danger, especially when the water is very clear.

Shotting a cast has much interest and pleasure for me; as I nip on the shot on a new cast past outings are recalled, and I picture in the future the well-balanced float, barely half an inch above the surface, sailing quietly downstream, and its disappearance with a plump when some good fish annexes the bait!

There are two methods of shotting a cast properly, and these are shown in the accompanying illustration. I use them both. In rather swift or heavy water, where the swim is deep, I generally employ No. 1 cast, as I find that the weight of the shot bunched together seems to get the bait down more quickly than cast No. 2, with the shot apart. The bunch of shot seems to keep the float steadier, while the two single shot, one near the bottom of the cast, and the other half-way down the hook length, also, I fancy, maintain the bait in a fairly natural position, and prevent it from being whirled about by any undercurrent. No. 2 shotted cast is suitable for lighter water, and it will be noticed that the shot on the hook length is close to where it is looped to the cast.

VI

The Depth to Fish

Generally speaking, most fish keep fairly close to the bottom, and anglers should bear this in mind when out with float tackle and bait after roach, bream, barbel, dace, carp, tench, gudgeon, and other similar fish. Perch, on the other hand, may often be caught at varying depths, and rudd especially frequently feed just under the surface, while dace and chub are to be encountered taking fly and other food close to and on the top. When perch fishing, it is a good plan to first try a few inches off the bottom, and if this is not satisfactory—if no bites are experienced—to then alter the float so that the bait swims at about mid-water.

To ascertain the depth accurately, a plummet is necessary, and when the hook has been passed through the ring on the plummet and inserted in the piece of cork which is let into the lead at the bottom, the line and float should then be carefully lowered into

the water, keeping the line between the plummet and the rod top tight all the time. In this way the bottom will be easily "felt," and the float can be so adjusted that the bait will swim clear about an inch or so—perhaps the best depth at which to fish. At times, some anglers, especially on cold days, allow the bait to slightly drag, and this is not a bad plan when the bottom is free from weeds and other obstructions. Fish are then deep down, and will take a bait as it is slowly carried along.

One day I remember catching some excellent roach with the bait—paste—lying on the bottom. I was fishing in a small but deep and crystal-clear stream, and from my concealed position behind some rushes I had a good view of the whole performance. I had previously discovered the roach, numbering about thirty, swimming up and down, and gingerly lowered the plummet. I soon had the proper depth, and when the pellet of paste sank on to the sandy bed of the stream one of the largest roach made a kind of "nose-dive" at it—the fish literally stood on its head, tail uppermost, and gently sucked in the piece of paste. Simultaneously it began to move off, and I struck and brought a fat pound roach to bank. I got half a dozen of the roach—which all stood on their heads to take the paste—before the shoal made off. It was highly amusing, and not a little exciting, to watch the antics of the roach, and I have, I may add, also seen bream in very clear water on the Norfolk Broads rooting about in exactly the same position as that assumed by the roach.

In plumbing a swim, the angler should begin at the top end and keep raising and lowering the lead all along until the other end of the pitch is reached in order to see if the bottom is even. Sometimes a perfectly level swim will be met with, and other places will yield a most uneven bottom with perhaps a considerable rise or fall in the ground, and it is best in these cases to search for a better spot, especially when roach fishing.

VII

With Leger and Paternoster

Leger tackle is often used, especially for bream and barbel, both of which fish are bottom feeders, and what is known as light legering for roach is indulged in by numerous anglers. In deep, heavy water, or water which cannot be properly fished with a float, leger tackle is extremely useful. A leger consists of about two yards of gut, a bullet or flat-shaped lead ("coffin"), and a hook. The cast runs through the bullet or flat-lead, which is prevented from slipping down on to the bait and hook by a split shot. A good position for

the leger to rest is about 1 foot above where the hook length of gut is looped on to the cast.

Perch anglers use paternoster tackle a good deal, and I have also killed chub, bream, and barbel, and, of course, pike, with it. I like a fine paternoster better than a leger in a chub hole, and I have caught a good many bream and roach when paternostering, more particularly in tidal rivers.

The paternoster is made up of from 2 to 3 yards of gut, having a small pear-shaped lead looped on at the bottom, to act as a sinker. Some anglers fish with three and four hooks, but I prefer only one when trying for chub, roach, and bream, and two for perch. If more are fished with, the tackle is apt to become entangled and rendered useless in the water, especially when small live minnows, gudgeon, or dace are used.

VIII

Weather and Water Conditions

When the wind is in the south
It blows the bait into the fish's mouth

runs an old couplet, and undoubtedly the south and south-west winds greatly favour the angler in his operations; but if he remained at home until either one of those particular winds was blowing I am rather afraid that he would often not see much of the waterside. Fish are to be taken in all kinds of winds under certain conditions, but I particularly hate a blustering north-west wind or a dark, dull day with an "easter" sweeping over river or lake. Calm winds, whether from a warm or a cold quarter, are the winds which count, particularly in the autumn and winter. Even in the winter, if the angler has a nice bush or belt of rushes at his back, he not only receives protection from the elements, supposing it is a cold and windy day, but the swim and fish are also supplied with cover. That is the reason for so many fish in the winter hugging the overhanging banks. I must confess that I don't like cold, high winds for fishing either in summer or winter, but one can frequently find decent pitches with a lee, and there better results than one anticipates are at times to be met with.

Sudden frosts put fish, roach particularly, off feed, but should the sharp weather continue several kinds of fish—the winter-feeding fish—appear to grow accustomed to the lower temperature of the water and often bite freely in deeps and slow-moving eddies.

When the sun blazes down on the water, anglers should seek a shady spot, though even there on a hot, bright day fish are often

very disinclined to take a bait, however nicely it is put to them. There are, however, exceptions to the poor sport which then frequently falls to the lot of an angler, and before to-day I have also known a big haul of bream to be made in a piece of water fully exposed to the light and glare of a sweltering August day.

Evening, and very early on a warm morning, are the best periods of the day for summer angling.

Fish are considerably affected by the temperature of the water, and when this is low it is often difficult to tempt them. They keep close to the bottom and become lethargic and dormant. An unsettled water, one which is often rising and falling, seems to put fish off feed, but I have been more successful on a falling than a rising water. I fancy a rising water introduces a good deal of natural food on the scene, and I have an idea also that the fish then have fears as to their safety—whether they will get washed away from their old quarters and, as it were, become lost. Many a time I have seen fish splashing and priming on the submerged banks of a river and in an inundated meadow, but if fish are scared at such times they also possess wonderful natural instinct which tells them that as soon as the flood water begins to fall or recede it is time they regained the river. It is really wonderful how few fish get left behind in the fields even during the heaviest and most wide-spreading floods.

Roach will sometimes feed in flooded hollows on the bank, on water-covered riverside lawns, and in depressions in the fields, and I well remember catching half a dozen of these fish up the Thames, near Pangbourne, while perched on a gate and fishing in the mouth of a dyke which was connected with a flooded field. When fishing in the floods, red worms and bread-crust have proved my best baits, but it is, I may add, an uncertain game. I can recall the capture of some roach under a railway bridge near Windsor during a flood, but the strangest roach swim surely must have been that between two rows of cabbages in a riverside garden in the Royal Borough, which yielded fish of over 1 lb. each. I was shown the place while the flood was at its height, and there was quite a nice stream running !

IX

Likely Spots for Fish and Fishing

The angler who makes a good bag often owes much of his success to the selection of the right spot—a river or lake may be excellently stocked, but that does not mean that the quarry is to be found everywhere. As with human beings, fish also have their likes and dislikes, and they move about a good deal before finally deciding to make such and such a hole or this eddy or that lay-up their home. Fishes' tastes differ considerably—fast streams and scours which dace and chub delight in do not suit bream and barbel, which resort to holes and pools; tench prefer muddy quarters, roach enjoy sandy, gravelly patches; and perch and pike delight in quiet, deep waters. But the principal matters which weigh with fish, in choosing a home, are food and protection, for it appears to me that two of the main objects of their life are to eat and to avoid being eaten. Fish also select certain haunts in order to protect themselves against floods and heavy streams and cold and boisterous winds.

The angler, therefore, who has become conversant with the habits of fish is often well repaid for his knowledge, and I would urge on all anglers the importance of studying, as far as possible, the life history of their quarry.

In a general way, fish are found in shallower water in the summer than in the winter, when they resort to the deepest parts. Of course, the angler should never neglect the deeps in the summer season, for bream, barbel, tench, and other fish are to be found there, as they are also in places where there is less water.

Roach, dace, and chub delight in the warm months in nice streamy runs close to the bank, and in the channel, and also are to be met with in quiet, circling eddies and bits of clear water passing through beds of weeds. These "weed runs," as they are called, often yield some particularly nice roach and dace. Chub specially delight in the shade and cover of overhanging bush and tree. Most fish are to be caught in mill and weir pools, which are favourite haunts in the summer and autumn. These places furnish sharp streams, shallows, holes, and eddies, and often much old woodwork, which fish delight in, but anglers abhor where fine tackle comes into play. Perch are frequently to be taken in lock cuttings and under bridges, though fairly deep water in the vicinity of weeds is difficult to excel for sport among the black-striped fish in the summer months, taken all round.

When the leaves begin to fall fish of most kinds seek their winter

quarters in the deeper and more placid waters, and river anglers then frequently catch them quite close to the bank. Cold winds and frosts drive the fish in among the submerged roots of tree, bush, and sedge, and many a good catch I have made in these sheltered swims. I once caught 20 lb. of beautiful Thames roach in a little piece of water between two leafless overhanging hawthorn-bushes, and at another similar spot got well among a shoal of perch. It was frosty weather and the river was pretty high and fast, but the bushes broke the force of the stream near the bank, and in these little "pockets," as bush swims are known up the Thames, the current was nice and slack. The fish not only found a rest there from the racing stream in the channel, but also doubtless picked up a good deal of natural food, which had drifted in. Corners and bends in rivers where there are eddies and lay-ups are pretty certain to contain fish.

In canals, lakes, and ponds fish affect the deepest water as a rule, but the vicinity of rushes, reeds, and weeds has a particular attraction for them. Sometimes rudd, bream, and perch will work right into the reeds; and therefore it is a good plan to cast the float and bait as close up to the aquatic vegetation as possible if the place is clear of surface weeds. A little groundbait thrown in will often draw the fish out, but it must be made up lightly in order that it flakes away easily and does not sink to the bottom like a lump of lead, in which condition it would be of very little use.

X

Rods and Tackle

Knowing from experience that many anglers when making a start are somewhat in a dilemma as to what to buy in the way of gear, I thought I would preface this booklet with a list of useful articles, from a rod to a piece of sewing silk and cobbler's wax with which to mend a break or whip on a hook.

The rod is, of course, an all-important item, and my advice to anglers is to get a good rod. By "good," I do not mean the most expensive rod in the tackle shop, but a rod which is well made and finished off, is light without being whippy, and looks as though it will stand a certain amount of wear and tear. The state of the angler's pocket will often be the deciding factor as to whether it is to be a cheap or an expensive rod; but what I wish to make clear is that an angler can get a good cheap rod as well as a good expensive rod.

There are numerous kinds of rods which will answer for bottom-

fishing purposes. They are generally made of hickory, deal, ash, greenheart, lancewood, and canes, from which woods many capital rods are turned out. Rods composed of whole cane for the first and second joints and a lancewood or greenheart top find much favour, as do rods built of deal or ash for butt, cane for middle, and lancewood or greenheart for top. Other rods are made of cane throughout, and excellent they are when well balanced, and not too long.

"What length of rod shall I require?" is a question often raised when a novice or beginner is about to visit the tackle-dealer's. It all depends on what style of fishing the rod is wanted for. If for bank fishing, a good general length is from 11 to 12 or 13 feet. A punt or boat rod should be about 10 feet long.

By paying a little more, a rod with two tops can often be obtained, one being used for float fishing and the other—the shortest and stoutest—for legering. All these rods are fitted with a place for a winch and rings through which the line runs.

But there is another class of rod from which winch fittings and rings are entirely absent, except a small flat ring at the tip of the top joint. This rod is known as a roach pole, and is much used by Thames and Lea anglers, but is not one which I can recommend until an angler has learned to thoroughly master the rod with the reel, rings, and running tackle.

What is known as a "tight" line is used with a roach pole; the line, consisting of from 1 to 2 feet of silk, a 3-yard gut cast, and a hook length, is attached to the before-mentioned flat ring, and when a good-sized fish is hooked it requires exceptionally delicate handling, as the rod is stiff, with little "give" in it, and there is no line to let out in the case of an unexpected rush on the part of the quarry.

Roach poles are long tapering rods built of special cane, and when a fish is hooked, the butt or bottom joint has to be frequently disjointed before it can be brought near enough to the bank for the landing-net to play its part. All the time, while with one hand the angler is removing this portion of the "pole," he must keep the remainder well up in the air, and the line tight, as slack line then would probably result in the escape of the fish.

The roach pole is entirely a bank rod, and in length it varies from 15 to 20 feet. I like one of about 15 or 16 feet. In the hands of a good angler a roach pole is undoubtedly a very killing rod, and with it anglers can frequently fish in swims which cannot very well be got at with the running tackle rod.

One of these last-named rods fitted with two tops can be used for all kinds of fishing, including barbel, bream, and chub; but when

an angler does much legering for barbel I would advocate a little stronger built rod, which the tackle-dealer will provide when he explains his requirements.

There are numerous reels on the market, and some of them are so beautifully designed and finished as to be works of art. These reels will be found extensively illustrated and described in the leading fishing-tackle makers' catalogues, and the particulars and prices there given will greatly assist the angler in making a selection. For general bottom fishing, one of the wooden Nottingham centre-pin reels with check action is to be highly recommended, as it is strong, easy to work, has no complications, and can be used for either float fishing or legering. The aerial is also a grand reel, and has a most delightful action when casting out or floating the bait downstream. I use both these reels, and they fulfil every requirement.

Plaited and twisted lines are the principal lines—I prefer the former as it is less apt to kink and become entangled when casting—and these lines are generally used undressed for ordinary float fishing in a river or canal. A little mutton fat or "Mucilin" applied to them with a piece of rag will cause them to float; the angler, when using running tackle, should always endeavour to keep his line on the surface, as, when a fish takes the float under and he strikes, he is much quicker on the fish than if yards of the line were lying soddened under the water. A fine-dressed line is often used for barbel fishing, and this comes in handy when long casts from a boat have to be made for bream or rudd on a windy day, say on some big lake or broad.

Anglers should pay great attention when selecting gut casts and hooks to gut (known as hook lengths), and only buy the best. Faulty, carelessly tied casts and badly wrapped hooks have lost many a fish worthy of a glass case and a place of honour in the hall or "den."

The sizes of floats vary with the different types of water fished—streamless or swift, shallow or deep and heavy. Smaller floats are required for canals, slow-flowing rivers, and ponds than for deep, fast-running water and large lakes and broads. Goose-quills, porcupines, and shoulder cork floats, all of medium size, and well shotted down, furnish excellent floats for most kinds of bottom fishing. Chub and barbel floats are generally bigger and heavier, and a bream float can be larger than a roach float. On the other hand, the lighter and smaller the float the better very often when the angler is trying some secluded nook for the wily carp. The perch is a voracious feeder, and is generally no respecter of floats when he has caught sight of a wriggling worm or a nice plump

minnow, but all the same it is best not to use too large a float—a good goose-quill or tapering cork float answers admirably.

The angler will find a hook and cast book useful, as also pliers with which to pinch on shot and a file for a blunt hook, while caps and shot should on no account be omitted from the basket when going fishing.

Last, but certainly not least, is the landing-net. Don't leave that at home! A good plan is, when the waterside is reached, to always put it together before starting to fish. I prefer the net proper to be of undressed cord, and a V-shaped net is an excellent pattern.

XI

Angling Afloat: A Few Hints

A boat or punt enables the angler to reach many pieces of water which are not available from the bank, while it is impossible to fish some swims unless one is afloat. On such rivers as the Thames a small dinghy or punt is very handy, the angler thus gaining access to swims on the opposite side of the river, where is frequently found much cover for the fish in the form of overhanging willows, pollards, and bushes, high clay banks, under which lurk chub, perch, roach, and pike, and numerous eddies and lay-ups.

Anglers should not attempt to fish from a boat or punt unless they can thoroughly manage these craft, for they may interfere with rather than promote their sport. Besides, there is danger lurking in weir-pools, rapids, and river traffic.

A dinghy can be moored with poles or weights, but I like to tie up to a bush when the opportunity presents itself. There should be a rope at each end of this boat for the purpose. Moor or tie up head upstream, unless it is elected to fish across stream as with a punt. Anglers should be careful to moor out of the way of channel traffic in such large rivers as the Thames. The safest way to moor on the tidal rivers connected with the Norfolk Broads is sideways—not across the stream—in order to give the wherries, yachts, and motor-boats a wide berth. In mooring to poles, enough rope should be given to allow of the boat rising with the swell caused by passing craft—when a boat is fastened too tightly the poles are often loosened and dragged adrift. Many a good swim is spoilt in this way.

Both in approaching a likely spot or swim or when moored there, the least disturbance the angler makes the better, in the water and in the boat or punt. He should be careful not to stamp or walk about too much, as fish are very sensitive to vibration,

and even a reel dropped in a boat has been known to put down a shoal of chub.

It being decided to fish a certain swim, the angler should row past it as far away as possible and then quietly drop downstream to it, stern first. By this means, the fish are not disturbed and the angler can fix up, put in a little ground-bait, and begin fishing at once.

XII

Hook Baits

The list of baits used in the capture of the bottom-feeding fish is an extensive one, but the baits which do the principal execution are half a dozen—worms, gentles, paste, bread-crust, wheat, and caddis grubs.

Other lures include wasp grubs, pearl barley, cherries, and small strawberries, greaves, cheese (made into a paste), shrimps, bullock's pith, snails, boiled potato, bloodworms, beetles, grasshoppers, banana cubes, macaroni, and so on.

The first six baits will take any kind of freshwater fish, including chub and carp, but the chub delights, perhaps more than any other fish, in such a varied menu that he neither refuses a cherry nor a piece of the spinal marrow of a bullock! Carp are often to be caught with a piece of potato or a small whole potato, perch will go for a shrimp (boiled and peeled), and before to-day snails have accounted for a good bag of tench.

Paste is generally made of white bread, which should be two or three days old and worked up with the hands until it is of a nice soft consistency; it should not be hard or lumpy. Bread-and-bran paste often kills well among roach, and I mix up a piece of my ground-bait stiffly for this purpose. Before placing it on the hook I dip it in a little dry bran, and have also found this a good dodge with white paste. The bran becomes detached by the action of the stream, and the floating particles seem to draw the fish up into the swim and put them on the watch for food. A pellet of bread-and-bran paste also slowly breaks away from the hook as the stream carries it along, and I think that is why it frequently brings success to the angler.

Lob worms, brandlings, and red worms are three excellent lures for barbel, bream, perch, and tench, and when the water is muddy roach will often bite at worms well. Trent anglers especially make good baskets of roach with worms in a clear stream, particularly in the winter. Lob worms are best for barbel, and bream will take small lobs freely when they are feeding. Red worms are excellent

lures for dace and gudgeon. To keep worms fresh and lively place them in plenty of fresh moss.

In my experience—a pretty long one—I have seldom found bread-crust ignored by roach, and in the winter it is about the only bait I use for those fish, except when the water is turbid, and then I try worms, crust, and white paste. Some of the best Thames professional fishermen swear by bread-crust.

This bait is obtained from a well-baked loaf—several days old for preference—and divided into little dice-shaped squares. The loaf must have been previously thoroughly soaked. Cut from it slices of crust with a thin layer of crumb attached, and divide these up with a sharp knife into the before-mentioned squares or cubes. Do not squeeze the water from the loaf or the cubes, which are now ready for use.

Caddis grubs are the larva of the sedge flies, and are the curious little creatures which one finds crawling slowly along the bottom or attached to old wood and stonework, weeds, etc. They are known by various names in different parts of the country. In my native county (Nottinghamshire) we called them strawbaits (as they were often found in little tubes resembling bits of straw), and they are known as cads up the Thames and Lea, and case-worms on the Lark, in Suffolk. The caddis grubs use these little "houses" for protective purposes, as fish, voracious water insects, and certain birds are always on the prowl for tit-bits.

In order to extract the grub, the tail end of the case should be gently squeezed or pinched, and when the head appears it should be carefully drawn from its covering. Cads are excellent baits for dace and roach, and chub, barbel and trout will also take them. They can either be used singly or in a bunch, as one sometimes fishes with maggots, and it is best to impale them on the hook head first.

XIII

Ground-baits and Ground-baiting

Ground-bait can be a good and a bad friend to anglers—bad when it is injudiciously and carelessly used, as frequently happens. The majority of anglers use too much ground-bait, especially when roach fishing, and ground-baiting for such hungry fish as bream and barbel, which root about the bottom for food, can also be easily overdone.

The chief mission of ground-bait is to attract fish to a swim and keep them in it, not to fill them to repletion, when they would probably ignore the angler's paste or worms. Little and often

in ground-baiting is a good rule to follow when fishing for roach and dace and they are biting slowly.

Bream and barbel holes are sometimes baited up two or three days in advance, and if the angler is not too lavish with the bait, it puts the fish on the lookout for further good things. Thames professionals will sometimes use several thousand lob worms when baiting up a series of barbel holes, and many a time half a sack or even a sack of brewers' grains, bread, bran, and worms—all mixed up—have been dumped in well-known bream haunts.

One of the best general ground-baits is composed of soaked bread and bran. Most kinds of fish will feed on it. Bread forms the principal ingredient in nearly every kind of ground-bait. Another useful ground-bait is one made up of bread, bran, and gentles, or boiled wheat substituted for the gentles. Anglers, when after tench, sometimes use a mixture of bread, bran, rice, gentles, and worms. Treacle mixed with bread and bran is used by carp fishers. Crushed oil-cake, with which cows are fed, is capital stuff employed in conjunction with bread and bran or bread alone. Some anglers, particularly in Yorkshire, ground-bait their pitches with gentles, which they carry in a bag dangling from the neck, but if the stream is swift the gentles are carried too far down stream to be helpful. The gentle ground-bait is best adapted for rivers with slow-flowing currents, and at times it is very effective, though on the other hand myriads of undersized fish are frequently attracted to the spot.

It is very necessary to see that the ground-bait is of the right consistency to suit certain waters, or it will be of little service. Many anglers make the mistake of working up ground-bait almost as hard and stiff as a cricket ball. True, it needs to be stiffer in some places than in others, but a ball of ground-bait should never resemble a lump of lead. For gentle currents and still waters it should easily dissolve and break up—not remain stationary and inanimate. The bait may be somewhat stiffer when there is a fairly fast stream; then, too, it is a good dodge to weight the ball of bread-and-bran with a small pebble or stone in order to get it to the bottom quickly and to prevent it from rolling along with the current. When baiting a barbel swim, the worms may be cast in half a dozen or so at a time where there is a quiet hole or eddy, but when the stream is at all fast or boily it is best to enclose the worms in clay balls, from which they work out and are eaten by the fish.

When anglers fish with bullock's pith in the winter for chub, a ground-bait of smashed-up brains is used, the little particles being thrown in with a spoon close to the bank and allowed to float

down to where it is suspected a shoal of chub has its haunt. Anglers who bait with cherries also use small pieces of the fruit as an accompanying ground-bait. Ground-bait for a streamy swim holding roach, dace, chub, and other fish should be thrown in well above it, and then it is not so likely to be carried below the spot where the angler intends to fish with the hook-bait.

If fish begin to bite soon after the bait has been introduced to their notice, further ground-baitings should not be indulged in until the fish appear to be slacking off, when another ball or two of bait may be quietly dropped in.

XIV

The Popular "Coarse" Fish

How to Catch Them

The so-called "coarse" fish (Nature never fashioned anything more beautiful) include roach, bream, perch, barbel, chub, dace, rudd, carp, tench, gudgeon, and pike. There are also the eel and pope, or ruff, nor must we forget that handsome and lively little chap the minnow, sometimes referred to as the pink. As to most of these fish I propose to write of them here, more especially with a view of showing how and where they may be caught, but I shall deal with the pike in another booklet, which will be devoted entirely to the "fell tyrant of the wat'ry plane."

To select four of the most popular fish in the foregoing list is to name the roach, perch, bream, and dace, and I propose therefore to deal with them first.

They are four fish which one often meets with in what is known in circles piscatorial as "a mixed basket."

Roach anglers are the more numerous body by far. Where there is water, there is pretty certain to be found the angler with the long light rod and tiny float. The haunts of roach may be said to range from a duck pond to a salmon river. In short, roach are ubiquitous.

Roach will bite all through the recognized legal angling season for those fish—from June 16 to March 14. In summer sunshine, and on frosty winter days, they take under the float! But roach are not easily caught, for few fish are more wary, shy, and uncertain in their feeding habits.

I can recall many days during my long experience when I have been after roach and never had a nibble. On other occasions, roach have fed well, and pretty and exhilarating sport it has been

landing fish after fish, plump, silvery, and red-finned, on a light rod and fine cast from some rush-fringed river or foamy mill-pool, the latter often frequented in the summer by shoals of large roach.

The roach generally resort to water of medium depth in the summer, retiring to the deeps on the approach of winter. They are to be found in streamy runs, eddies, and lay-byes, and quite close to the bank when the water is pretty high and running fast in the channel. A favourite lay-up where rivers are swollen and turbid is at the mouth of some dyke, where there is often a slack bit of water. In the summer, roach have "hides" and feeding-grounds among the weeds, and one of their favourite haunts is a long bed of waving weeds in close proximity to a nice clear gravel patch. Down this gravel run, the angler should send a little ground-bait followed by a bunch of gentles, or a piece of paste or cube of bread-crust on the hook. The bait should travel just off the bottom not only there but in the majority of swims.

Roach are gregarious—they work about in shoals—and on hooking one, the angler should keep his rod well up and refrain from pulling on or hurrying the fish—a remark, by the way, which applies equally to all hooked fish. But it is very desirable, if possible, to prevent the fish from splashing about and to play it quietly to the bank, where the landing-net is gently sunk under it and it is lifted from the water. Often a shoal of roach is frightened away by the struggles and splashes of one of its number which has been hooked.

One of the bank rods which are described in these pages will do excellently for roach fishing, and good baits include paste, bread-crust, gentles, worms, and boiled wheat. Roach put up a good fight for liberty, especially in a sharp stream, and the big fish will often try and "hang up" the angler in the weeds. It is the large and sly old roach which often take under the float with a quiet draw; small roach bite much quicker. Roach are often taken from ½ to 1 lb., which is considered a nice fish, and specimens of 1½, 1¾, to 2 lb. and over occur, though there are thousands of old anglers who have yet to catch one of the latter weight. The biggest English roach weighed 3 lb. 10 oz.—a mammoth fish—and was caught in Hornsea Mere, Yorkshire, a remarkable piece of water—it is unfortunately private—for giants of the roach family.

The Thames, Kennet, Colne, Lea, Great and Little Ouses, Avon and Stour (Hampshire), Stour (Kent), Stour (Suffolk), Lark (Suffolk), Derwent and Wharfe (Yorkshire), Witham (Lincolnshire), Trent (Nottinghamshire), Severn, Wye (Herefordshire), Waveney, Bure, Yare, Thurne, and Ant (Norfolk Broads), are among some of the best roach rivers.

Dace delight in glides and runs, lively shallows, and, in the winter, deepish eddies and pools, and they are frequently taken when roach fishing. Two of the best baits for dace are gentles and red worms. An excellent ground-bait is bread and bran into which there has been introduced a liberal supply of gentles. Dace bite sharply, and one should strike the instant the float dips.

Both roach and dace are also caught on light leger tackle and by float legering, these methods of fishing being resorted to where the stream is fast and deep or a rather swirly eddy has to be operated upon.

When float legering the bite can be seen and felt simultaneously.

Tackle for this consists of an ordinary gut cast and a hook of suitable size (some hook sizes for different fish will be found under "Contents"). One shot is placed on the hook length, and a small bullet or flat lead a few inches up the cast. The lead is prevented from running down to the hook length by a shot. Cast in, find the depth, and then adjust the float so that when in a slanting position it peeps about half an inch above water. The line must be kept tight, and when a fish sucks in or runs with the bait the line is pulled through the lead resting on the bottom, the float glides under, and a tug is felt at the rod top. Then strike firmly.

Float leger tackle may also be employed when bream or barbel fishing, and in a chub hole it is often useful.

The perch stands high in the angler's estimation, and the black-striped fish is luckily found in most kinds of water—river, lake, broad, mere, canal, and pond. The perch is the fish of our boyhood's days. Many a salmon and trout fisherman began his angling career by catching perch in some pond or canal. Unfortunately, however, perch are by no means as numerous as one could wish to see, but I think they are increasing again in some waters, particularly up the Thames and on the Norfolk rivers and broads. A good many years ago perch were killed off in thousands by a mysterious disease, the Thames and Kennet suffering a heavy loss in this connection.

The angler should look for perch in holes close to the bank, round about weed and sedge beds, near old moss-coated wood and stonework, and in mill and weir pools. The latter are favourite summer haunts. In the cold months, and especially during frosty weather, perch betake themselves in shoals to the deepest pieces of water. In the winter I have often caught perch where bushes have overhung the water or in the vicinity of old, partially submerged tree stumps and piles. And I have on those occasions had some pretty stiff fights with plump 1 and 1½ lb. perch which made determined downward rushes for these dangers to fine tackle.

One of the charms of perch fishing is the opportunity it gives of trying numerous different pitches—of indulging in a kind of roving commission. Unless perch soon show signs of being present—they are generally pretty hungry—the angler should find another likely spot, and keep changing swims until he is rewarded with a satisfactory result.

Perch will bite at worms, minnows, gudgeon, small roach and dace, shrimps, gentles, and other baits, and they will also take a small spoon or other bright spinning lure. Occasionally they are to be had with a small salmon fly "jigged" through the water. But the most killing way to fish for perch is to use float or paternoster tackle and bait with worms or live minnows or gudgeon (small). When baiting with the small fish named, the hook should be carefully passed through the upper lip of the bait, and when the angler sees the float "running away"—in other words, going under—or feels a "tug, tug" at the rod top, when paternoster tackle is in use, he should avoid striking too hastily, giving the perch plenty of time. He can then make pretty certain of his quarry. Wait until the float is going well away or the pulls at the rod top have been repeated before striking. Hold the rod well up, and be prepared for a piscatorial battle, for a good perch is game to the rim of the landing-net. The fish will bore down and make lightning-like darts and rushes for liberty. The Thames, Kennet, Great Ouse, Medway, Avon and Stour (Hampshire), Stour (Suffolk), the Upper Bure, Thurne, and Ant, Wye (Herefordshire), and Little Ouse are among some good rivers for perch, and those fish are also fairly numerous on some of the Norfolk Broads, especially Hickling, Barton, Potter Heigham, Wroxham, Ranworth, and Salhouse.

Bream are generally considered to be summer feeding fish—June, July, August, and September (if warm), are the four principal bream months—though in mild weather they are occasionally caught even as late as Christmas. After a run of flood water I have also taken bream in February. The dark golden-bronze colouring of the bream is then perfection, and they are generally very fat and plump, while no angler could grumble at the sport afforded by a winter-hooked bream. On fine tackle, a large bream—a 4 or 5 lb. fish—requires careful handling, and in a streamy river especially the angler can never say the fish is his until it is in the bottom of the landing-net.

The principal haunts of the bream are rivers, lakes, meres, broads, canals, and drains, the last-named represented by the many placid waters to be found running through the Lincolnshire Fens. Large hauls are often made by baiting up places two or three days prior to fishing them. Two exceptional catches were recently made

(August, 1920) on Hickling Broad, where Mr. R. Burns landed 217 lb. and 285 lb. of the bronze-coloured fish as the result of a couple of outings. Needless to point out that takes of this description do not come the way of the angler very often, and indeed he should be well satisfied if he gets 20 or 30 lb. of good-sized bream. I am speaking of the common or carp bream. There is another and much smaller bream which is frequently met with and is known as the silver bream or bream-flat. It is a slimy little fish, and a pounder would rank as a good specimen. The waters in Cambridgeshire, Lincolnshire, and Norfolk are the chief homes of these bream. They have a rather curious way of taking the bait, rising with it instead of, as the majority of fish do, descending or moving off with it. This upward movement often results in the float falling flat on the water, but I do not advise the angler to strike until it begins to move off.

The bronze bream are generally fished for with float and leger tackle, but I have also taken them on a paternoster baited with paste or a worm in the Yare, Arun, and one or two other strong-flowing tidal rivers. The early morning is one of the best times to catch bream on feed, but of course they bite throughout the day, and some enthusiastic and enterprising anglers make good bags when night fishing.

Paste and worms are favourite baits, but bream will also take boiled wheat, gentles, bread-crust, caddis grubs, wasp grubs, etc.

The bait should be close to the bottom; when legering, it of course rests on the bed of whatever water is being fished, and as in the case of the perch plenty of time should be given before striking. Let the float go well away.

Bream delight in deep, quiet holes and gentle-flowing pieces of water, and are to be found on muddy bottoms as frequently as on sandy, marly patches. On the Norfolk Broads, the bream feed in shoals, rooting among the mud and weeds like a drove of pigs, and making the water turbid all round the scene of their foraging expeditions for food, incidentally, too, giving the game away to the watchful and observant angler, who stealthily moors his boat, casts a well-scoured worm as bait where the shoal is at work, and often thins it down considerably!

Some of the best bream rivers include the Great Ouse, Medway, Arun, Wey, Nene, Cam, Avon (Worcestershire), Witham (Lincolnshire), Thurne, Yare, Bure, Ant, and Waveney (Norfolk), and the numerous "drains" near Boston, Lincoln, Wisbech, and Tydd.

Barbel are by no means common in our waters. They are entirely river fish, and are only found in the Thames, Trent, Kennet, Colne, Lea, Wey, Mole, Derwent (Derbyshire), Wharfe, and Ouse

(Yorkshire), and a few other rivers. The Thames holds the largest and probably the most barbel.

These fish favour haunts where the bottom is chiefly composed of sand and gravel, and in the summer they are frequently found in and below weir pools and in good deep, lively pieces of water of from 4 to 6 or 8 feet. They reach a large size; barbel of over 14 lb. have been caught in the Thames. The general run of the fish is from 1½ to 7 lb. A good many are taken from 3 to 5 lb.

The Thames barbel are principally caught with leger tackle baited with a lob worm, cheese paste, or a strip of greaves. The latter is less used than the other two baits. It is obtainable from the tallow chandler's, and the whitest pieces should be reserved for the hook. Other pieces of greaves may be enclosed in bread and bran or a slight covering of clay and thrown in for ground-bait.

On the fall of the leaf, especially if the weather sets in cold, barbel forsake their summer homes and establish themselves in the deepest, quietest, and most sheltered parts of the river, where they often assume a kind of dormant condition and seldom seem to take a bait. Occasional barbel are caught in the winter after the subsidence of a flood, and I have had one or two exciting fights with them on roach tackle. They have generally annexed a cube of bread-crust when I have been trying for roach in some bank eddy.

Barbel tackle from the rod to the hook should be of the best. A very game and powerful fish has to be dealt with. Sometimes a barbel will take out twenty or thirty yards of line, and in a streamy run it can put on much pressure. The rod, therefore, should be resilient without being whippy, and I like one built wholly of greenheart or of ash or hickory for butt, with a cane middle joint and a lancewood top. While not being too thick and heavy the line—for preference a dressed one—should be of considerable strength, soft and flexible, and free from "kinkiness." It must run smoothly through the rings, as the angler will at times have to make some long casts in order to get the lead and bait in the desired hole or run, while when a barbel goes off with a rush it is very necessary that the line should meet with no check.

I am supposing that the angler is legering, and when the bait has reached the bottom the line should be kept tight between the lead and the rod.

In using running tackle, as Trent anglers mostly do, the line should be rubbed with mutton fat or "Mucilin" to make it float. Then a quick, clean strike can be made, although the float may have been pulled under by a barbel 20 yards or more downstream.

Unless a barbel swim has been previously baited up, the ground-

bait, made into balls about the size of a duck's egg, can be quietly thrown in just above where the float is generally cast, and this bait should soon break up on the bottom of the swim. Anglers who leger from the bank also squeeze some ground-bait round their bullet or lead, while another plan is to affix a piece of match to the gut-cast, some 12 or 15 inches above the lead, and work the ground-bait round the two ends of the match. It is easy with a sharp jerk to detach the ground-bait when the angler feels it touch the river bottom. The advantage of using this method of ground-baiting is to be found in the fact that the angler can always rely on placing it at any given spot.

In the early part of the summer, from June 16 (when the barbel season opens) onwards, barbel may often be seen leaping from the river in their efforts to get rid of an irritating parasite, and as a shoal of barbel is very likely to be at that particular spot the angler would do well to try his leger tackle there.

Another river fish giving good sport and requiring no little skill to catch is the chub, which, like the barbel, is particularly partial to clear-flowing rivers with sandy, gravelly bottoms. The chub also loves to bask under shady banks and secrete itself in all kinds of little nooks and corners of the winding stream.

When a 3 or 4 lb. chub is hooked its rushes for snags and weeds are not easily forgotten.

The catching of the cunning chub is often no light matter.

Chub frequently resort in small shoals, and there is great fun and no little excitement when the angler discovers one of these "family parties" and introduces to their notice a lump of cheese paste, a lively minnow, a knob of bullock's pith, or, say, a medium-sized ruddy cherry. The bait is pretty certain to be taken, and then be prepared for squalls! The hooked fish, supposing that old submerged tree roots and boughs are present, will assuredly make a dash for them, and there is a very critical time for the angler. He must not concede an inch of line, but hang on and trust to his tackle. Rod, line, gut trace, and hook length must be sound in every detail to meet the sudden strain.

Float fishing is much indulged in for chub. The rod should be light but powerful. A floating line is essential, and the float should be a pelican quill or one of the tapering cork type, shotted down so that about an inch of the tip appears above the surface. Likely places at which to encounter chub include a streamy run under an overhanging clay bank, water shaded by alders and willows, holes in bends, quiet eddies, and weir and mill pools. The angler should first plumb the depth carefully and arrange the float so that the bait swims well off the bottom. Ground-bait may then be used

sparingly, after which the hook-bait should be started on its mission, the rod being held well up while the float journeys along. Then when a fish is hooked, do as I have suggested, and with the least possible disturbance, when the opportunity presents itself, guide the fish from the danger zone—*i.e.*, the rooty fortress—to water free from snags and other tackle-wrecking obstacles.

Chub are to be caught in holes with paternoster tackle, a favourite bait being a piece of cheese paste—the cheese should be soft and "high"—a minnow, or a lob worm. The bait should from time to time be very gingerly raised and lowered, and if there is no response soon, another likely spot should be operated upon. I have taken some nice chub paternostering with cheese paste in quiet, bush-overhung bank-holes up the Thames.

The rudd is one of the handsomest fish anglers place in their creels. It has also won favour for its sportive qualities and for rising to the fly. Rudd and roach are sometimes mistaken, though when mature these fish differ in shape, colouring, and other particulars. The rudd, for instance, has a much smaller head and mouth and is much broader than the roach, and its lovely golden-bronze colouring and fins of deep carmine are not seen in the roach. If the angler will examine the position of the dorsal or back fin he will find it differ considerably. In the roach, the dorsal fin begins in a straight line with the ventral fin; in the rudd, the dorsal fin is placed considerably farther back and more towards the anal fin.

Rudd are not numerous in our waters. In many rivers they are rarely caught. During the thirty or more years I have fished the Thames I have taken less than half a dozen rudd. These fish are principally found in lakes, broads, meres, and ponds. Of the few rivers giving a home to rudd, the Great Ouse certainly holds the largest if not the most rudd. These fish are also met with in the Cam, Little Ouse, Ant, Thurne, Bure, Yare (the four last-named are rivers connected with the Norfolk Broads), Stour, and Waveney (Suffolk), Witham and drains (Lincolnshire), and a few other rivers. The Norfolk Broads, Slapton Ley (Devonshire), and the Grand Military Canal (Kent) are well-known rudd haunts.

Where rudd are present, they are often caught when the angler is roach and bream fishing. They bite at gentles, worms, and paste best. A cube of bread-crust is another excellent lure. Rudd are taken at all depths, but principally close to the surface, and when hooked show much sport on fine tackle. Some anglers, when fishing for rudd near the top, use a self-cocking float, with one small shot high up on the hook length; others dispense with the shot. The cast should be about 2 yards long and attached to a line which floats. In using an ordinary float, a small-sized bullet should be

xed on the cast to cock it, with one small shot, if the water is not too clear, on the hook length of gut. The depth from the bottom of the float to the bait should be about 2 feet.

Rudd are particularly fond of feeding and gambolling about in the vicinity of weed beds and along the sides of reeds and rushes, and here the finest fish are frequently caught. When a rudd takes the bait it has a habit of pulling the float along sideways, and the angler should allow a little time before striking, especially when fishing with worms and gentles.

To ascertain if rudd are in the vicinity throw in small pieces of crust towards the rushes and weeds, and as these are carried along on the surface by the wind, the rudd, if present, are pretty certain to leave their hiding-places and begin nosing and nibbling at the floating bread.

Rudd are also to be taken with a bunch of gentles cast as a fly and will also rise to the fly.

Both carp and tench are to be caught in running streams, but the still waters are their principal homes. One always associates these fish with water-lily-adorned lakes, rush-fringed meres, and deep ponds. Moats and other waters connected with monasteries and castles in olden times held carp, and to-day the golden-coloured fish flourish in some of the ancient moats still to be met with in different parts of the country. Tench also do well in ballast pits, and when a deep, inky-black stretch of water is seen in some secluded wood or coppice, the angler inwardly exclaims, "That looks a likely spot for tench!"

Of the rivers known to hold the common carp, those in Sussex—the Arun, Ouse, Adur, and Rother—have perhaps acquired the most fame, as it was in the waters of this county that these fish were originally introduced from abroad. Now there are few general fish rivers which do not contain some carp. Specimens of exceptional size lurk here and there in the Thames and Lea, Wey, Stour (Kent), Medway, Great Ouse, Brue (Somerset), Stour (Suffolk), Chelmar (Essex), Avon and Stour (Hampshire), and a few other rivers; and tench, too, are found in the rivers I have named. In some of the deep, quiet upper reaches of the Thames there are a good many tench, and I have known of a catch of over 60 lb. to reward an angler there before to-day.

Besides the common carp, which is a short, fat, dark bronzy-gold coloured fish with large scales and a long dorsal fin, we have king carp and crucian carp in some of our waters. The king carp, which grows to a large size (up to 20 lb. and more), is also known as the leather carp, and it has few scales, the skin to the touch feeling like a piece of velvet or soft leather. Hence the last-named

appellation which has been bestowed upon it. There are a considerable number of king carp in the Ouse and Adur, in Sussex, and in the latter river at Henfield one of 18½ lb. has been caught by a Brighton angler. King carp also flourish in lakes and ponds, and in what is known as Chingford Carp Pond (Essex), one of 19½ lb. was brought to bank by Mr. J. T. Fisher, a member of the Lychnobite Angling Society (London). This is the largest king carp I have heard of on the rod. Crucian carp are principally confined to private and ornamental waters. They run much smaller than common and king carp. A 2½ lb. crucian carp is considered a fine specimen. The Red Spinner Angling Society has some large crucian carp in its private fishery at Cheshunt Reservoir. From this water, Mr. John Andrews has captured the biggest common carp on record—one of 20 lb. 3 oz.

The general run of common carp is from 2 to 5 or 6 lb.—in some waters they average much smaller—and of tench from 1 to 3½ lb. No tench of over 7 lb. is believed to have been caught by an angler during the last half-century.

White bread paste and potato paste are favourite baits with those who specialize in carp fishing, while worms and gentles may be said to come next in attractiveness. Honey or sugar is often worked into the bread paste, experience showing that the carp has a "sweet tooth." Good baits for tench include worms, gentles, wasp grubs, and caddis grubs.

Float and leger tackle can be used, and it should be as fine as possible, as carp and tench, particularly the former, are crafty fish. Carp have been seen to pick up a piece of paste, hold it for a moment without moving, and then expel it and swim away. The weight of the line may have aroused suspicion or perhaps the hook was seen or felt.

In ponds and small lakes, carp should be tried for with a small float—a crow-quill or medium-sized goose-quill—carrying at most from two to four shot, and honey paste as bait. The two or three yard cast and gut hook length, without being thick or coarse, must be perfectly sound, and should be well soaked before use. The bait should be close to the bottom, but in warm, sunny weather, when carp show an inclination to come to the surface, fish with the bait in mid-water or near the top. Try the edge of lily beds, patches of weeds, and holes with a bottom of sand and marl. In legering, use a light bullet or lead provided with an extra large hole, in order that the line may run through without friction. After the leger has been cast in, draw from the reel a little lin and let it rest in a coil on the bank. On a carp taking the bait—bread paste, potato paste, worm, or other lure—it will probably

move off, and will run out the line on the bank—the signal to then strike.

Tench favour a good many places, but they generally seek deep, quiet holes where weeds, sedges, and other aquatic vegetation furnish cover, and from these haunts they often issue forth into open water in search of food. A large red worm or brandling makes a tempting bait where tench are concerned, and anglers also get them with gentles, wasp grubs, and "cads." Tench will further take boiled rice and wheat. Strong tackle is advisable, as the tench is a good fighter, repeatedly boring down and running for its weedy haunts.

I am referring to the common tench—the fish with the dark olive-green coat and pink eyes—but there is also another species of this fish known as the golden tench. Strangely enough, anglers frequently describe the common tench as a "golden tench," but the two fish differ greatly in colouring and other respects. I have already roughly told what the common tench is like; the golden tench is a beautiful orange and pink tint, with here and there dark blotches, and in shape it is more like a golden orfe than a tench. Both the golden tench and the golden orfe are seldom caught in waters available to the public, but they may sometimes be taken in private lakes and ornamental ponds. I have known a golden tench to be caught in the Yare at Brundall (Norfolk), and several authenticated specimens have been reported to me as being taken in private lakes near Lowestoft and Aldermaston, the latter place a few miles from Reading.

Reverting to the common tench, it will often bite well during hot, sultry weather and after a thunderstorm. Early morning and the evening are good times for tench fishing, and ordinary float and leger tackle can be used. The bait should be on or just off the bottom; and when the float begins to "run away," wait until it disappears before striking.

Much fun is derived from a day's gudgeon fishing when those sportive fish have shoaled and are in a biting mood. July, August, and September are the three principal months for gudgeon. Thousands of gudgeon congregate on sandy patches where there is a nice lively stream, and up the Thames both from punt and boat large numbers are caught. Professional fishermen disturb the bed of the river with a rake, worked behind the punt, an operation which not only colours up the water, but disturbs various kinds of natural food, which goes floating downstream and is eagerly snapped up by the active little gudgeon.

Rivers and canals hold the most gudgeon, and they are to be caught with tiny red worms, gentles, paste, bread-crust, caddis

grubs, and other baits used in bottom fishing. The gut should be fine and the hook small—a No. 15 crystal is a good size. A small cork float is recommended when a fairly fast stream is being fished, and it should be shotted so that only about ¼ inch appears above the surface. Gudgeon are quick biters, and the angler must strike directly the float goes under or he will often lose the bait as well as the fish.

Minnows may be caught in shallow water with gudgeon tackle and a tiny worm, and they are very useful as baits for perch and trout.

Bleak are also used as a live-bait for large trout and for pike at times, and they are chiefly caught near and on the surface with a tiny hook and float and a single gentle or house fly. They will also rise at a black gnat, Zulu, Wickham, or other fly.

Minnows and bleak are river-loving fish, and they chiefly affect little shallow runs and lay-ups close to the bank.

The pope, or daddy ruff, is another fish met with in some rivers and canals, but he is not seriously fished for; indeed, some anglers far from welcome the presence of this member of the perch family. The idea prevails among some anglers that when daddy ruffs appear the other fish leave the swim. Whether this theory applies generally I am unable to state, but I remember once catching twenty daddy ruffs in a hole famous for bream, and not a single bream !

There is one more fish which the angler often encounters—I refer to the eel. Large edible eels are welcomed, but the small fry of the slippery tribe—the "bootlaces"—are detested. The hooking of the latter often means the loss of a good hook length and a waste of time, for these small eels have a nasty habit of tying one's tackle up into a mass of knots and slime.

Legering is the best method of fishing for eels, and the hook length should consist of gimp or some kind of gut substitute—real gut is too good for these voracious and destructive fish. They consume a vast amount of fish spawn and young fry, and ought to be killed whenever possible in sporting waters. As an instance of their voracity eels have been known to take young dead birds and the leg of a small rabbit ! I have a suspicion, too, that eels are responsible for the disappearance of many of the ducklings which are reported missing from time to time.

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